

## RECOGNITION OF THE REPUBLICAN LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

## SENATE GOALS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, first, I would like to congratulate President-elect Obama on his victory. It is a rare honor for the Senate to send one of its own to the White House. In fact, I think it has only happened two other times, Warren G. Harding and John F. Kennedy, who went directly from the Senate to the White House. Regardless of party, every one of us, I am sure, feels a certain institutional pride in the event.

I called the new President shortly after his victory to offer my congratulations, and he was gracious in congratulating me on my own victory when he returned the call. As it happened, when he returned the call, I was grocery shopping in the local Kroger and enjoying the people passing by saying "Congratulations."

There I was in front of the cereal talking to the new President on my cell phone. What I told him was we would all be here to work with him once he takes office. I think both of us are eager to confront the challenges ahead. I told him he can expect cooperation on the confirmation of qualified nominees to key Cabinet posts. Faced with two wars overseas and a complex financial crisis at home, the American people should not have to worry about a power vacuum at places such as the Pentagon, the State Department, Treasury or the Department of Homeland Security.

Now, history offers a fairly clear path to success or failure for new Presidents. It is there for every new President who comes in to observe. The path I have discussed with the President-elect is one that can lead to success. As I see it, we face a simple choice: We can either work together to confront the big issues, the big issues of the day that neither party is willing to tackle on its own or the majority can instead focus on narrow partisan issues that appeal to a tiny sliver of the populace but which lack the support of the American mainstream.

In my view, the choice is rather simple, but the work that follows will not be. So I hope President-elect Obama will go after the big things and go after them early. If he does, our chances of achieving a positive result for the American people will be greatly increased.

We can start with some of the things President-elect Obama spoke about on the campaign trail, such as cutting spending, paying down the national debt, providing speedy tax relief, committing to a long-term strategy for energy independence, and reining in our out-of-control entitlement spending that threatens to consume 70 percent

of the Federal budget in 9 years. Let me say that again: Our out-of-control entitlement spending will consume 70 percent of the Federal budget in 9 years.

These are the challenges on which Senator Obama campaigned. They also happen to be issues upon which Republicans and Democrats should be able to reach some agreement. The American people are looking to us to resolve these issues, and Senate Republicans are eager to get that work done.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, let me say through the Chair to my distinguished counterpart, congratulations on your victory. As George Will, the esteemed columnist, wrote over the weekend, he compared your victory to Henry Clay, and I know the Senator is from the State of Kentucky. So I congratulate you on years of hard work.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I thank my friend, the majority leader.

## RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

## MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk the will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

## OHIO'S VETERANS

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, Ohio is home to more than 1 million veterans, dedicated men and women who have served in every branch of our Nation's Armed Forces and every major conflict in the modern era. They have served to keep our freedoms, so our Nation could remain secure. Ohioans have a long-standing tradition of service to our country. Ohio's veterans include Presidents and generals, from Grant to Sherman, and pioneers of American advancement, such as Neil Armstrong, John Glenn, and James Lovell.

But for every well-known American veteran, there are, of course, many more heroes who have quietly served this Nation and my State of Ohio with honor and distinction.

As our Nation looks forward to the return of our loved ones from the bat-

tlefield, all of us remember the tremendous contributions our veterans have made to Ohio and to our country. We are humbled by their patriotism and their bravery.

On Veterans Day and every day, it is my honor to thank Ohio veterans and their families for their service to our great State and our great Nation.

The Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame was created in 1992 to recognize the lifetime contributions of veterans, not just those who serve their country in the Armed Forces but also those who continue to give back since they left the service. I honor, congratulate, and salute all of them.

The Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame Class of 2008 is made up of several men and women whose stories I would like to briefly tell.

Samuel Arnold, from Butler County, is a U.S. Army veteran, Vietnam war. Arnold is a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 4369 board of trustees and provides dentistry to veterans who reside at Joseph House at little or no cost.

Paul Baldrige, Jr., from Franklin County, is a U.S. Navy veteran. Baldrige has served in a number of veterans organizations, including the Navy League of the United States, where he has held positions as State president, national director, and vice president.

Oscar Decker, Jr., from Union County, is a U.S. Army veteran, Army National Guard and Army Reserve in World War II and Vietnam. Decker organized the Union County Military Family Support Group in 2003 and was awarded the Legion of Honor Award from the Chapel of the Four Chaplains and the American Legion of Merit.

Rebecca Eden, a registered nurse from Cuyahoga County, is a U.S. Army Nurse Corps veteran, World War II. Eden is a lifetime member of Gold Star Wives and AMVETS. She was presented with the Veterans Affairs Commendation given by the Ohio Veterans Commission for helping veterans pursue educational goals in 1982.

Eugene Fitzthum, from Erie County, is a U.S. Army veteran, World War II. Fitzthum was presented the John L. Smith AMVET of the Year Award for all his volunteer work for AMVETS Post 17 in 2008 and Volunteer of the Year from the Ohio Veterans Home in 2006.

Nada Fleming, a registered nurse from Cuyahoga County, is a U.S. Navy veteran, Desert Shield/Desert Storm. Fleming is a past commander of Seven Hills VFW Post 7609 and was appointed as National VFW Nurse of the Year for 2006-2007.

Robert Haas, from Stark County, is a U.S. Army veteran, Korean war. Haas served as the volunteer liaison officer for the U.S. Military Academy, West Point, for the past 29 years. He is a founding member and past president of the Greater Cleveland Chapter of the Korean War Veterans Association No. 69.